Holiday recess

7 indoor 'playgrounds' to check out during kids' winter break

SUNDAY LIFE, 1E

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ST. PAUL

DECEMBER 17, 2017

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Choi discusses Castile case

Ramsey County attorney explains his decision to bring charges in fatal police shooting

By Sarah Horner
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After Philando Castile was fatally shot by a police officer during a traffic stop in Falcon Heights nearly a year and a half ago, it seemed like nearly everyone wanted to weigh in on what should happen next.

Calls for the officer to be charged came swiftly. Many in the community believed St. Anthony police officer Jeronimo Yanez had recklessly killed the 32-year-old while Castile's girlfriend and her 4-year-old child looked on.

Others came to the defense of Yanez and other police officers tasked with making split-second, life-and-death decisions.

Their opinions weren't the ones that counted, though. The decision rested with Ramsey County Attorney John Choi.

In November of last year, Choi made history when he became the first county attorney in Minnesota's modern history to bring criminal charges against a police officer involved in an on-duty fatal shooting.

Choi charged Yanez with one count of second-degree manslaughter and two counts of dangerous discharge of a firearm for endangering the lives of Castile's girlfriend, Diamond Reynolds, and Reynolds' daughter.

Reynolds live-streamed the shooting's immediate aftermath on Facebook, capturing worldwide attention when the footage when viral.

In June, a Ramsey County

JOHN CHOI, 7A

JEAN PIERI / PIONEER PRESS

"I believe I did the right thing," Ramsey County Attorney John Choi said Thursday of charging officer Jeronimo Yanez in the Philando Castile shooting. Yanez was later acquitted.

'Space for everybody'

Frogtown's new $7.7 million, 23,500-square-foot recreation center will replace a small, aging one in the growing, diverse St. Paul neighborhood

JEAN PIERI / PIONEER PRESS

Donntrell Mathews, 7, left, guards against Eric Brown, a recreation leader for the city of St. Paul, on the basketball court at Scheffer Recreation Center in St. Paul on Thursday. "Can't wait for (the new building) to be here in the community," Brown said of planned replacement for 6,600-square-foot center. He said the current facility's small basketball court isn't big enough to host official games.

By Tad Vezner • *tvezner@pioneerpress.com*

The tales told about Frogtown's biggest recreation center include frigid temperatures, a crumbling interior wall and plenty of mouse poop.

There's more history there than you think: The land where it sits, near the corner of Marion Street and Como Avenue, was the site of the St. Paul's first playground, the Eighth Ward Playground, built back in 1909.

And now, after years of community cajoling and millions of dollars in secured funding, the neighborhood will get a new rec center. It will be four times as big, with triple the athletic courts, open twice as many hours.

Come spring, contractors — who have yet to be determined or even bid — are scheduled to

ST. PAUL REC CENTER, 8A

Mueller probe obtains Trump emails

Transition group says messages were improperly released

By Stephen Braun and Chad Day
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian contacts with President Donald Trump's campaign has gained access to thousands of emails sent and received by Trump officials before the start of his administration, according to several people familiar with Trump's transition organization.

But the investigators did not directly request the records from Trump's still-existing transition group, Trump for America, and instead obtained them from a separate federal agency that stored the material, according to those familiar with the Trump transition organization.

A transition attorney sent letters Saturday to two congressional committees saying the General Services Administration had improperly provided the transition

TRANSITION EMAILS, 4A

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